



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor O'Malley Signs House Bill 744

Construction Services Bill for the Employment and Training of Offenders through Maryland Correctional Enterprises

TOWSON, MD (May 13, 2008)---Governor O'Malley today officially signed off on House Bill 744, submitted by Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, that will enable MCE to provide employment and training to offenders in construction-related services.

Effective July 1, 2008, House Bill 744 will allow MCE to establish construction training programs to provide invaluable experience to the offender population. Projects will be identified that are capped at under \$500,000 and can be completed behind the fence while allowing live training experiences. Curriculum will be formed in conjunction with building trades to ensure the highest level of training and transferable skills. MCE will also continue to reach out and partner with construction companies around the state in order to provide referrals for future workforces.

MCE is the prison industry arm of the Maryland Division of Correction (DOC). Through employment of over 1,600 offenders across the state in several business units behind bars, MCE gives offenders the opportunity to gain transferable job skills and a work ethic that will help them succeed upon release.

MCE's customer base consists of tax-supported entities such as government and non-profit organizations. They are an asset to taxpayers by not only providing cost-effective services and supplies to such entities, but also through the reduction of recidivism rates. MCE's inmate recidivism rate is less than half that of the rate for inmates in the general DOC population. They also aid the institutions in which the offenders are employed by giving constructive work opportunities that require offenders to remain infraction-free, thus creating a safer environment for staff and inmates.

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